FENNELL, ARTHUR B. =CAPTAIN, CANADIAN SIBERIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE= October-December 1918

(031)

October 28th, 1918

Lieutenant A. P. Fennell, M.C.,
Care Y. M. C. A.
Ottawa.

My dear Fennell:

I have applied to General Gwatkin for your release on the grounds of university urgency. He replies that the situation is rendered difficult by the fact that you were brought to Canada on the personal recommendation of General Elmsley for duty, and if you had not returned for that purpose you would be serving overseas. He therefore thinks that under the circumstances the department cannot initiate action for your release, but advises that if you wish to resign you can apply for permission to do so through the usual channels, and he has no doubt that such an application would be given due consideration at Militia Headquarters in view of our requirements.

Will you be good enough to make an application at our request stating that I approached you in the matter when I found that you were going to Siberia, that I laid before you the fact that the University will be seriously inconvenienced if you remain away much longer on account of the health of the Registrar himself and the problems that are facing us now owing to the return of men from the front? I think if you will do it at my request it would relieve you of any personal feeling in the matter. With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

YMCA, Ottawa
Nov. 2nd 1918

Dear Mr. President,

Ym letter of the 28th reached me several days ago and I regret very much that I have not been able to answer it more promptly.

I find it very difficult to comply with ym request for the reasm that having been brought from England for special duty with the Siberian Expedition I do not feel free to resign my commissoin when under orders asking for my return, they should sanction it without requiring me to perform the very unpleasant task of resigning.

I regret that I have taken so long to frame this answer but the matter has scarcely been out of my thoughts since I received ym letter. I am sure that ym will realize the difficulty of the situation in which I am placed.

Ymrs Sincerly
Arthur B. Lemmon

for service overseas. An officer who resigns his commission during wartime, and particularly when under orders to proceed overseas is apt to find such an action criticized and his motives questioned.

When I saw you in Toronto I said that I was quite ready to abide by any decision that the Militia Headquarters would make, and I am prepared to carry on with my work here or return to the University as they may direct, but I think that it is unfair of them to throw upon me the responsibility of taking the initiative when that involves the resignation of my commission.

May I suggest, Sir, that as the Minister himself was away when your correspondence took place with General Gwatkin, it might be possible now to take the matter up with General Newburn as he has since returned. I feel that if the Department is willing to recognize the urgency of the grounds upon which you are

November 9th, 1918

Captain A. P. Fennell, M.C.,

Care Y.M.C.A.,

Ottawa.

Dear Mr. Fennell:

Sir Robert asked me to send you a copy of a letter he received this morning from the Minister of Militia in answer to a letter asking for leave of absence for you. Evidently nothing can be done from this end in order the obtain our desire.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President's Secretary.

November 23rd, 1918

Captain A. E. Fennell, M.C.,
Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Captain Fennell:

As you are aware the office of the Registrar in the University has been conducted under great difficulties during the past three years, most of which time you have been absent at the front on active service. The strain has told on the Registrar himself, and on one or two occasions we were very anxious as to the condition of his health.

Now that demobilisation has begun the University is faced with almost greater problems than were before it at the opening of the war. Students are beginning to come back, and soon they will be upon us in large numbers. Adjustments of all kinds in courses in the various Faculties will be necessary. New developments are afoot, and we certainly cannot carry on without help either from yourself or from some one else who could take your place, but it is impossible for us to find any one to put in your place at present. The experience that you have had now for years is a necessity for us.

I have already written to General Gwatkin and to the Minister asking them to release you from your position in the Siberian Expeditionary Force, but they have both said that while they are willing to do so the matter must be initiated by yourself. In these

circumstances I hope that you will see that your duties in the University now are as important a piece of public service as those in the army are likely to be. Will you be kind enough therefore to ask to be placed on the reserve list in order that we may use your services in the University in the immediate future ?

Yours sincerely,

President.

YMCA, Ottawa
Dec 8th 1918

Dear Sir Robert,

I have just received from O.C. Signal Training Depot here a copy of a letter which he has received from the Militia Authorities in reply to my letter asking to be transferred from the Siberian force to the reserve of officers C.E.F. I am enclosing this copy which you will see states finally that I cannot be allowed to make this transfer and accordingly I am preparing to move with

matter of fact, now that they have given such a definite ruling. I am becoming quite enthusiastic over the prospect of the year's service in the East. At the present time I am actually commanding the unit in the absence of the O.C. though that sounds more than it means.

Yours Sincerely
Arthur B. Fennell

the Signal Company which will leave for Victoria B.C. on Thursday if the present orders are not changed.

I have just received a letter from the Registrar stating that you have me in view in connection with some work for returned soldiers, but it looks to me very doubtful if you will be able to convince the government that you need me sufficiently to have me taken off the Siberian Expedition. As a

(C o p y)

Ottawa, December 5th, 1918.

Officer Commanding,
Signal Training Depot,
Lansdowne Park, O t t a w a.

Lieut. (Actg. Capt.) A. B. Fennell,
6th Signal Company, C.E.F., Siberia.

With reference to the application of the marginally noted officer to resign his commission, please inform him that the Adjutant General has instructed that the 6th Signal Coy., C.E.F. Siberia, will go forward as arranged.

His request, therefore, to be transferred from the 6th Signal Company, C.E.F. Siberia, to the reserve of officers, is not granted.

(Signed) T. E. Powers,

Lieut.-Colonel O.A.R.C.E.